

THE CLEVELAND
MUSEUM OF ART
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CLEVELAND, OHIO

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THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS YIDDISH FILM FESTIVAL

June 2, 16, 23, and 30; July 7, 14, 21, and 28

Since 1976, The National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, has been systematically collecting, restoring, and preserving Yiddish-language films. Nine classic movies, most from the 1930's and restored by the Center, comprise this series presented by The Cleveland Museum of Art between June 2 and July 28. Yiddish cinema during this early period was a direct offshoot of traditional Yiddish theater, reflecting a rich and mystical folk culture and the unique flavor of Yiddish speech. The festival offers insight into Jewish culture of the early 1900's, with themes ranging from the promise and hardship of immigration, to the conflict between old-world values and social change, to the influence of traditional religious ideas in contemporary life.

East and West was made in 1923. The oldest film in the festival, it is silent and will be shown with live musical accompaniment by the Kleveland Klezmerim. Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich, American Yiddish stage actors travelling in Europe at the time, are featured in this classic comic story of an American-Jewish garment manufacturer who decides to take his fun-loving daughter on a trip back to his Polish homeland and on to Vienna, with many clashes of cultures along the way. At the other end of the spectrum is a much darker film, *The Dybbuk*, made in 1937. The eerie story revolves around the link — before, during and after life — between two young people whose fathers pledged them to each other before either was born. Playwright S. Ansky infused the original drama with the folklore of the Ukrainian provinces of Volynia and Podolia; this film version translates that mysticism into a stylized, expressionistic view of a culture that was all but wiped out by the tragedies of World War II and the Holocaust. All of these Yiddish-language movies share that historical dimension, as many aspects of the world they portray now exist only in memory — and in a few films. Fortunately, the National Center for Jewish Film has undertaken the task of preserving that film record.

(Film details next page)

Shown Sundays at 2 pm. Admission \$3, CMA members \$2 (unless noted).

June 2 *East and West*, Austria, 1923. Directed by Sidney M. Goldin. With Molly Picon. B&W. Silent with Yiddish and English intertitles. 61 min. The Kleveland Klezmerim will provide live musical accompaniment to this delightful clash-of-cultures silent comedy, about an American garment manufacturer who takes his fun-loving daughter to his "backward" hometown in Poland and then to sophisticated Vienna. **Special admission: \$5, \$4 CMA members.**

June 16 *Uncle Moses*, USA, 1932. Directed by Sidney Goldin and Aubrey Scotto. With Maurice Schwartz. B&W, subtitles, 86 min. Vivid depiction of Jewish immigrant life on New York's Lower East Side during the decades before WWI. From Sholem Asch's novel. At 2 pm, before the film, Sharon Pucker Rivo, Executive Director of the National Center for Jewish Film, will give a brief talk on the history of Yiddish cinema.

June 23 *Tevye*, USA, 1939. Maurice Schwartz directed and starred. B&W, subtitles, 96 min. Moving film version of Sholem Aleichem's famous story about a Jewish patriarch in turn-of-the-century Russia who tries to withstand the winds of change.

June 30 *The Dybbuk*, Poland, 1937. Directed by Michal Waszynski. B&W, subtitles, 123 min. Mystical, expressionistic tale of broken vows, death, possession, exorcism, and transcendent love that focuses on two 19th-century European lovers pledged to each other before birth. This fully-restored classic--reconstructed from prints and fragments found all over the world--is one of the supreme achievements of the National Center for Jewish Film.

July 7 *Jolly Paupers*, Poland, 1937. Directed by Leon Jeannot and Z. Turkow. B&W, subtitles, 62 min. Musical comedy following two hapless small town entrepreneurs as they pursue fame and fortune. Preceded by Shaul and Yitzhak Goskind's 9-min. documentary *Jewish Life in Bialystok* (Poland, 1939).

July 14 *Green Fields*, USA, 1937. Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer and Jacob Ben-Ami. With Michael Goldstein and Herschel Bernardi. B&W, subtitles, 95 min. A family of simple peasants take in an orphaned itinerant scholar.

July 21 *The Light Ahead*, USA, 1939. Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. With Helen Beverly and David Opatoshu. B&W, subtitles, 94 min. In this sardonic portrait of Russian Jewish life, two beggars, one lame, one blind, are forced by superstition into a marriage.

July 28 *Mirele Efros*, USA, 1939. Directed by Josef Berne. With Berta Gersten. B&W, subtitles, 80 min. A noble and pious widow locks horns with the daughter-in-law she chose for her eldest son in turn-of-the-century Europe.

The Museum's *Yiddish Film Festival* is made possible in part by a gift from
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